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LB 849

SENATOR HARTNETT: Mr. President, members of the body, there are three parts to the committee amendments. I think we discussed the bill, had a good discussion on some things, is that first part of the committee amendments would strike the Volunteer Service Award Benefit Review Board would exist for one year, run from July the 15th, 1999, to July the 15th, 2000. Then that...the function would be turned over to the State Fire Marshal, and that the appropriations in the bill that the state would have to fund was...was...in the original bill was \$250 per award benefit, and this simply would lower it to \$100, and that's simply what the committee amendments do.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Senator Hartnett. There are no lights. Oh, okay, Dwite Pedersen, please.

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the Legislature, just a couple...one question I'd like to ask Senator Hartnett. Senator Hartnett, in reading...in reading the bill, it does include those people who man the rescue squads and the entire fire department. Is that true?

SENATOR HARTNETT: Yes, that's correct,...

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Thank you.

SENATOR HARTNETT: ...Senator Pedersen, yeah.

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: When I first read this bill, I had some concern about the fact that if you live in a community like Elkhorn, where I live, Elkhorn has recently gone on I think completely paid fire department, and the taxes we pay in Elkhorn then now would go the General Fund and we'd be paying two departments. But after hearing Senator Baker and Senator Smith talk this morning, it makes a lot of sense that if we've got people who are out at the state parks, driving the state highways, them, and they have accidents and stuff, they're going to have to call on these volunteer departments to save their lives and to help them out, so I do believe with the expense of this that it justifies the cost of state funds. It's...I was a volunteer fireman some many years back for ten years and I know quite a few others in here have worked in volunteer fire